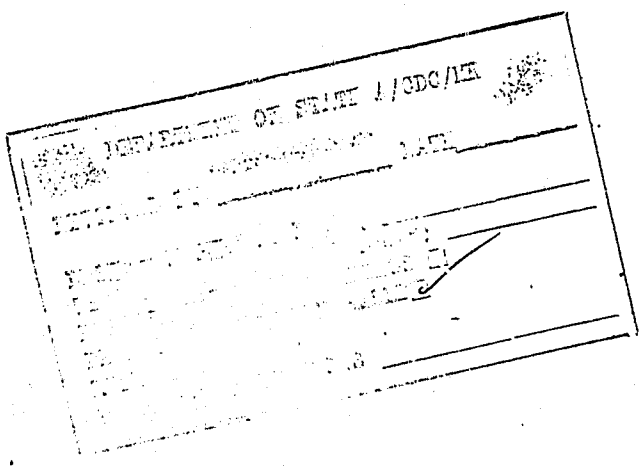
12/7/78

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (1813)



D R A F T
December 7, 1978
ARA/CAR:ACHewitt/btk

Peoples Temple

Answers to Questions in Chairman Zablocki's letter of November 21 to Secretary Vance

1. QUESTION: To what extent were the Department of State and the American Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, aware of the potential danger to the Ryan Delegation of a visit by them to Jonestown?

ANSWER: The Department of State and the American Embassy in Georgetown were not of the opinion that Congressman Ryan and his party would be in physical danger as a result of visiting the Peoples Temple community at Jonestown providing permission for the visit had been obtained in advance from the Peoples Temple. The Peoples Temple agricultural commune had been visited on some eight different occasions by U.S. Government officials in the four years since its inception without incident (memos at TAB—), In addition, there were a number of visits by various dignitaries, including Lt. Governor Mervyn Dymally of California in December 1976. High officials of the Guyanese Government including then Foreign Minister Fred O. Wills visited Jonestown during this same period, also without incident. The Guest Book

of the Jonestown community, which came into the Embassy's hands after the tragedy there, indicates that outside visitors were quite frequent. This book, which covers the period from early July through mid-November 1978 records some 98 visitors, including GOG officials, officials of the Government party, members of the Guyanese media, representatives from foreign embassies, and others (COPY OF THIS BOOK AT TAB ). Apparently these visits passed without incident as well. In addition, Embassy officers discussed the Peoples Temple with local police and district officers at Port Kaituma and Matthews Ridge in the course of their visits to the area. Some of these officers were uneasy about the Peoples Temple but none of them was able to report a single incident of violence or abherrent behavior by residents of Jonestown. Indeed, the most critical specific ~~rumor~~ COMPLAINT made by a local official was that the Peoples Temple was in the habit of distributing food to the Guyanese inhabitants of the Port Kaituma region. This official implied that the generosity of the Peoples Temple made the GOG look bad by comparison (Log ).

Many of the visitors to Jonestown noted above were probably sympathetic to the Peoples Temple and its ....

announced goals, and hence could expect a warm reception. However, in September 1978, Jonestown was visited by Joseph Mazor, the San Francisco private investigator who had for several years been representing the parents of minors who, it was claimed, had been brought to Guyana illegally by the Peoples Temple. It is clear from letters written by officials of the Peoples Temple that the Reverend Jones for some time regarded Mazor as one of the Temple's principal enemies, and indeed seemed to have him in mind in his rambling references to "mercenaries" who might some day attack Jonestown. When he visited Jonestown, Mazor was acting on behalf of an unnamed California movie producer. He reported afterwards to the Embassy that he was received cordially by the Reverend Jones and the residents of Jonestown, and that he was deeply impressed by what he saw there. Given the former hostility between the Reverend Jones and Mazor, the latter's sudden conversion is open to several interpretations. Nonetheless, he was a visitor who, because of his previous record, might have expected to encounter extreme hostility from the members of the Peoples Temple, and it is worth noting that he encountered none. (LOC )

Only on two occasions does the record show that the residents of Jonestown behaved in a hostile manner to outsiders. Both occasions involved attempts by Jeffrey Haas, attorney for Mr. and Mrs. Tim Stoen, to serve papers on the Reverend Jim Jones at Jonestown. Both attempts were unsuccessful, although Haas was accompanied by a Guyanese marshal, because it was claimed that Jones was absent from the settlement. On both occasions the members of the Temple were unfriendly and hostile to Haas, but not actually violent. (Does ¢ )

Both the Department and the Embassy emphasized to Congressman Ryan and his staff the importance of securing advance agreement for the visit from the Peoples Temple and indicated that failure to do so might result in permission to visit Jonestown being refused. (Does ¢ ) It was clearly implied in the Embassy briefings that any attempt to force entry into the community "could have unfortunate consequences of a legal and possibly even a violent nature". Indeed, in the statement released by the Peoples Temple on November 16 after it had withdrawn permission for the delegation to visit Jonestown because of the presence of newsmen and concerned relatives, the Temple threatened to ask

the GOG to station police around the community to prevent the delegation from attempting a forced entry. Once permission to visit Jonestown had been finally negotiated through the intervention of the Embassy, the GOG and the Peoples Temple attorneys, there was no further reason to expect violence.

As indicated above, it became evident during the Department's and the Embassy's briefings of Congressman Ryan that he was much more familiar with the Peoples Temple and its practices. If he had thought there was a serious possibility of violence being directed at him or his companions by the residents of Jonestown, he probably would have discussed it in the course of these briefings, but the subject never came up.

Although neither the Department nor the Embassy had reason to expect violence from the members of the Peoples Temple directed towards the Congressman or his party providing prior agreement to the visit was obtained, the Congressman was warned about the rugged physical conditions in northwest Guyana, and it was made clear that a visit to Jonestown would be a difficult undertaking at best, and might be impossible depending on weather conditions and the availability of aircraft and ground transportation.

2. QUESTION: What advice did the Department of State and the Embassy in Guyana give Congressman Ryan with respect to the potential violence which could arise as a result of such a visit of the presence of weapons in Jonestown and the mood of its inhabitants with respect to visits by outsiders?

ANSWER: As indicated in the answer to Question 1, neither the Department nor the Embassy had any reason to expect violence from the inhabitants of Jonestown directed towards Congressman Ryan or members of his party based on their record of previous behavior with respect to visits by outsiders. The single exception was the attitude of Jonestown residents towards attorney Haas when he tried to serve papers on the Reverend Jones as described above. Several Embassy officers who visited Jonestown during the previous several years and held conversations with the Reverend Jones described him as a paranoid personality. However, his paranoia seemed to be directed at cloudy "conspiracies" or unidentified "mercenaries" whom he believed were out to destroy him and the institution he had created ~~rather than at real people~~. By the spring of 1978, the Embassy had received a large volume of correspondence from concerned friends and relatives making numerous allegations against the Reverend Jones and the Temple some of which

involved the use of violence within the community for disciplinary purposes, but was unable to confirm or refute these charges despite many efforts to do so and, as indicated above, there had never been a case recorded of violence being directed by members of Jonestown community towards visitors or other outsiders.

The Department and the Embassy were unaware of the presence of firearms at Jonestown beyond a few that might be expected in a fairly sizable agricultural community located in a remote jungle area. The possession of firearms without a license is illegal in Guyana, and the GOG has since informed us that only four licenses had been issued to members of the Jonestown community. At one time Guyanese officials indicated concern to our Consul that the Peoples Temple might be engaged in smuggling arms, and thereafter subjected the Temple's trawler to inspection as it went back and forth TO TRINIDAD AND OTHER POINTS. However, no weapons were ever located ~~by them~~.

The Embassy and the Department were also aware of the reports of armed guards at Jonestown appearing in the Blakey affidavit, the petition from the OCR to Prime Minister Burnham, and in individual letters. Once again, it had proved impossible to confirm these allegations

either through direct observation by Embassy officers visiting Jonestown, or through the reports of Guyanese police officials and district officers whose visits to the community were often unannounced.

3. QUESTION: Once Mr. Ryan made known his intent to visit Jonestown, did the American Embassy request the Government of Guyana to provide the delegation with security protection or other assistance? If not, why not, and if so, what was the nature and extent of the response on the part of the Goverment of Guyana?

ANSWER: The Embassy did not request the Government of Guyana to provide the delegation with security protection or other assistance. It was felt that security protection was unnecessary if advarce agreement to the visit from the Peoples Temple had been secured in view of the many visits to the community by both local and foreign officials which had occurred without incident in the past. The Government of Guyana was informed of the delegation's visit well in advance of Congressman Ryan's arrival, and the Foreign Minister of Guyana received the Congressman for an hour-long meeting on November 15, the day after his arrival in Georgetown. In the meeting

with the Foreign Minsiter, Congressman Ryan made brief mention of the purpose of his visit, but made no request for protection. In fact, Congressman Ryan spent most of the hour discussing bilateral and international issues. (LOC At no time did the GOG suggest protection for the party or seemed to think it was necessary. The Government did send with the delegation on its visit to Jonestown an official from its Ministry of Information who was with the Congressman during his entire time in the Jonestown community. This officer accompanied the delegation into Jonestown, spent the night there, and returned to the airstrip with the delegation the following morning. (LOC )

As previously indicated, both the Department and the Embassy expressed uncertainty about the reaction of the Peoples Temple to the presence of newsmen and concerned relatives with the party. However, once the entry of newsmen and relatives into Jonestown had been negotiated by attorneys Lane and Garry, concern on this score subsided. In addition, the presence of Lane and Garry seemed to constitute an additional guarantee of security to the delegation. (LOC )

Although the Embassy did not request that the GOG provide security protection to the delegation and at no

time did Congressman Ryan or members of his staff request it, it seems likely that the GOG would have provided security had the request been made.

4. Question: What communication facilities were available to the Ryan delegation during the member's stay in Georgetown and Port Kaituma? What special arrangements for communications with Jonestown, if any, were made for the Ryan delegation?

ANSWER: While Congressman Ryan's delegation was in Georgetown the full range of communications facilities at the Embassy were available to him. In addition, Georgetown is reasonably well served by international telephone and cable communications. It was explained to the delegation by the Embassy that communications between Georgetown and Jonestown were primitive at best and consisted of an amateur radio link ~~to~~ BETWEEN THE COMMUNE AND its Georgetown office. Both terminals were, of course, under Peoples Temple control. In addition, there were telephone links ~~between~~ FROM Georgetown ~~and~~ TO Matthews Ridge and BETWEEN Matthews Ridge and Port Kaituma of uncertain reliability. Both the aircraft used by the party had the usual radio equipment, but this was

of limited utility while the aircraft were on the ground.

No special communications arrangements were made for the Ryan Delegation and its accompanying party, nor were they requested by the delegation. The Embassy lacked mobile radio equipment capable of reaching Georgetown from either Jonestown or Port Kaituma, and, in any event, there was no perceived need for such equipment once the visit had been accepted by the Peoples Temple. However, on the afternoon of November 17 an Embassy officer went to the Georgetown office of the Peoples Temple and used their radio to confirm the arrival of the Congressman and his party and that they had been admitted to Jonestown. It will be remembered that there had been some doubt up until the ~~previous~~ LAST MOMENT ~~day~~ that Congressman Ryan and his party would be admitted to Jonestown. The Consul spoke to Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Dwyer who was accompanying the delegation, was informed that the party had arrived and had been admitted, and that things were "going well". (LOG )

5. QUESTION: How many visits to Jonestown has the American Embassy made on behalf of citizens' inquiries since the inception of the settlement? What were the specific findings and results of these visits? Did the Embassy representatives have full and complete access to the inhabitants and facilities in Jonestown?

ANSWER: Officials of the U.S. Government made a total of eight visits to Jonestown since its inception in 1974. Five of these visits were made in the fifteen-month period between August 1977 and November 1978. Dates of these visits were August 30, 1977, January 14, February 2, May 10, and November 7, 1978. The visit on ~~March~~ February 2 was made by the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy and the Guyana Desk Officer who was visiting from Washington. The purpose of this visit was orientation and familiarization. No consular services were performed by these officers, ~~nor did they conduct any~~ and no formal interviews were conducted on behalf of inquiries from friends or relatives of Jonestown residents. However, they did move freely around the community and had the opportunity to chat informally with some of its inhabitants. The other four visits were conducted for consular purposes. A consular visit was scheduled for early August 1978, but had to be aborted and postponed because heavy rains had rendered the airstrip at Port

Kaituma unusable, and because the aircraft habitually used by the Embassy for these visits was unavailable due to mechanical difficulties. The transfer of Richard McCoy, who had headed the Consular Section of the Embassy for the previous ~~eighteen months~~ THE MIDDLE IN AUGUST, further complicated the rescheduling of the visit. Another brief visit to Jonestown was made by the Director of the USAID Mission in Guyana, who happened to be passing through the region in . However, USAID had no other contacts with the Peoples Temple nor did it provide any assistance to the colony. Individual reports on each of these visits by U.S. Government officials to Jonestown going back to the earliest in 1974 are at Tab .

The first of the regular consular visits to Jonestown that the Embassy attempted to make on a quarterly basis took place in August 1977. A regular program of visits had been made necessary by the rising population of Jonestown and the growing number of complaints from concerned relatives that Peoples Temple members were being held against their will or otherwise mistreated. Richard McCoy, who made this first consular visit and

the two succeeding ones in January and May of 1978, adopted a regular methodology in conducting his visits. It was necessary to inform the Peoples Temple of forthcoming visits in order to insure that Jonestown residents whom the Consul wished to see on more routine matters would not be absent from the community. In addition, there was some concern that those who had allegedly been mistreated or held against their will could be concealed and the Consul informed that they were absent from the community for one reason or another unless he provided the names of at least some of them to the Peoples Temple office in Georgetown in advance. Hence, he gave a list of Jonestown residents he wished to see to the Georgetown office of the Peoples Temple. However, he always withheld some names of people he wished to interview as a result of allegations by concerned relatives and asked to see them only after he arrived at Jonestown. In every case those he wished to interview, both those on the list he previously provided and those whose names he had withheld, were produced and he was able to interview them. He further required that those he wished to interview present their

passports to him to avoid any possibility of incorrect identifications.

During his three visits to Jonestown, Consul McCoy conducted some 75 interviews of Jonestown residents as a result of inquiries from concerned relatives. More than 40 of these were conducted under carefully controlled circumstances that assured complete privacy. Most of these interviews were conducted in an open space at a distance from any structure and with unimpeded vision in all directions. Other interviews were conducted in a corner of the pavilion, a large open structure which permitted privacy and largely eliminated the possibility of electronic surveillance. No interviews were ever conducted indoors anywhere in the community. Specifically, no interviews were conducted in the Jonestown radio shack as stated by Miss Jackie Spiers, assistant to Congressman Ryan, after her return to the United States.

In conducting sensitive interviews the Consul would inquire about the wellbeing of the individual and state the specific allegations that had been made by his friends or relatives. He would then ask the person if these

allegations were true. He would also offer to escort the person from the Jonestown community then and there and repatriate them to the United States. In no case did those interviewed confirm the allegations that had been made or take advantage of the Consul's offer to escort them from the community and repatriate them to the United States. The Consul never had the impression that those interviewed were afraid or suffering from emotional pressure, nor did their answers seem unspontaneous. (LoG )

It has since been alleged by Mrs. Deborah Blakey that, as the Consul's visits were known in advance, as well as the names of those he wanted to see, his visits were easily stage managed by the Reverend Jones and his lieutenants and individuals to be interviewed were rehearsed in their answers. This, of course, is possible. However, as indicated above, the names of some of those the Consul wished to interview were withheld until after his arrival and there was no way for the Peoples Temple to know in advance who he might ask to see. In addition, some of the reports of mistreatment should have been subject to visual verification. For

example, one report claimed that a ~~female~~ male resident of Jonestown had had ~~her~~ his head shaved as a disciplinary measure. However, when the Consul interviewed ~~her~~ him, ~~she~~ he had a natural growth of hair at a length that adequately refuted the report. Other reports of mistreatment did not lend themselves so easily to visual verification, but the Consul was on the lookout for any evidence of starvation, exhaution, or severe beatings of the sort sometimes claimed in letters from concerned relatives. He was never able to discover evidence of such severe mistreatment. He indicated in his reports that some residents of Jonestown performed hard physical labor as one might expect on a large farm, but he stated that they seemed well fed and cared for, and many expressed great satisfaction with their existence. (406 - )

The subject of possible brainwashing or other forms of mind control came up during Congressman Ryan's first visit to the Department on September 15. It was explained ~~to him~~ that consular officers cannot make definitive judgments on whether a person has been subjected to brainwashing or mind control, and it was suggested that

a trained clinical ~~psychologist~~ psychiatrist equipped to make such judgments be included in the delegation.

It was sometimes alleged in reports received by the Embassy that the Peoples Temple AT JONESTOWN had elaborate punishment facilities or locations where reluctant members could be concealed at Jonestown. Embassy officers visiting the community were alert for this possibility but were never able to locate such facilities or identify any structures not consistent with ordinary domestic, agricultural, or maintenance purposes. On one occasion, the Consul, ~~asked~~ the pilot of the aircraft in which he was ~~traveling~~ to Port Kaituma to make a number of passes over Jonestown and the sorrounding area at a height of approximately 200 feet. He observed the community clearly and took photographs in order to discover any SITES OR facilities he had been unable to observe from the ground. None was discovered.

The Consul was always accompanied on his trips to Jonestown by an official of the Government of Guyana, usually ~~a policeman or a~~ district officer from ~~either~~ Port Kaituma ~~or Matthews Ridge~~. This was necessary to assure transportation independent of that which might

be provided by the Peoples Temple, and it was also felt that the presence of a Guyanese official might reassure those who were fearful of accepting the Consul's offer to escort them from the community and repatriate them to the United States.

6. QUESTION: What information does the Department of State have with respect to the relationship between the Government of Guyana, its officials, and the Peoples Temple Church settlement in Jonestown and its facility in Georgetown?

ANSWER: The Government of Guyana had encouraged the establishment of the Peoples Temple agricultural cooperative in 1973. The files contain no report specifying why the GOG was receptive to the proposals of the Reverend Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple. Probably, the GOG saw a parallel between the espoused philosophy of the group, a form of cooperative socialism, and its own ideology. The agricultural plans of the Peoples Temple were clearly consistent with the high priority adopted by the GOG to opening up the interior of the country for agricultural development. In

addition, the GOG probably favored the development of a prosperous and populous community in an area that has been the subject of a long-standing border dispute with Venezuela. The GOG has since said that the Reverend Jim Jones showed them a number of letters from prominent people in California and elsewhere including both political and religious leaders praising him, the Peoples Temple, and its work among the disadvantaged. The files contain two such letters dating from this period from Congressman D. Clausen of California, and then Mayor J. Alioto of San Francisco (Logs 359 and 360).

The files also lack documents explaining the reasons why the Reverend Jones and the Peoples Temple chose Guyana for their agricultural commune rather than other countries where such an undertaking might have been possible. The sympathetic attitude of the GOG and the availability of large tracts of land on favorable terms were certainly major factors. The fact that Guyana's language is English and its people are largely Black as were more than half the adherents of the Peoples Temple may also have made it easier for the immigrants.

The precise legal status of the Peoples Temple in

Guyana is being investigated but is as yet unclear. In the spring of 1978 five members of the Peoples Temple at Jonestown applied for Guyanese citizenship. During his subsequent visit to Jonestown, the Consul interviewed them, explained that by assuming Guyanese citizenship they might jeopardize their American citizenship, and asked the reasons for their decision. They explained that the Peoples Temple commune had applied for status as a corporation under Guyanese law which also specified that half of the members of the board of directors of the corporation must be Guyanese citizens. The Consul asked why they wished to assume Guyanese citizenship to do this since it would be easier to get the required number of Guyanese to sit on the board and this was frequently done. They responded that they preferred to do it their way, the implication being that the Temple wished to retain total control over its own affairs. The GOG has since informed us, however, that the application of the Peoples Temple for status as a Guyanese corporation was still pending as of November, 1978.

The precise terms on which the Peoples Temple held the land on which they began to develop their agricultural

commune are also unknown. However, the terms are referred to in a number of documents, including a memorandum prepared by former U.S. Ambassador Max Krebs (Tab ), as a lease. The amount of land made available to the Peoples Temple is variously reported in the files as 27,000 acres, 23,000 acres, 2500 acres, and a thousand acres. It seems likely that the Jonestown immigrants were in fact homesteading, and that the GOG was glad to make available as much land as they could clear and work on nominal terms.

The GOG continued to give its blessing to the Peoples Temple agricultural community up to the date of Congressman Ryan's visit. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development, Dr. Ptolemy Reid, was widely regarded as the principal patron of the Peoples Temple in the Guyanese Government. Guyanese Ambassador to the United States, Laurence E. Mann, and a long time associate of Dr. Reid's, also reportedly kept in touch with the developing community at Jonestown. While Prime Minister Forbes Burnham met with the Reverend Jim Jones on at least one occasion, he does not appear from the record to have been paticularly interested in the community, and apparently he never visited it.

In addition to these contacts, there were reports that the Peoples Temple sought to ingratiate itself with other officials of the Guyanese Government. This behavior was consistent with patterns set earlier by the Peoples Temple in California where it became deeply involved with political figures and the political life of the community.

Some senior officials of the GOG began to become concerned about the Peoples Temple at the time of the major migration from California in the spring of 1977. Foreign Minister Fred O. Wills expressed concern to our Ambassador about the possible political motives of the Reverend Jones and the Peoples Temple in greatly enlarging the community at Jonestown, while the Chief of Immigration asked the Peoples Temple that the arrival of the first contingent of some 380 persons be delayed a week so that he could check on their desirability as immigrants. The Reverend Jones sought to allay these fears by showing additional letters and statements from prominent people in California. The Reverend Jones also reportedly showed GOG officials an envelope which he said contained a check for $500,000 which would be deposited in a bank in Georgetown and used to meet the

expenses of the new immigrants. The Peoples Temple is known to have maintained a working account in a government-owned bank in Georgetown which averaged several hundred thousand dollars. The Peoples Temple office in Georgetown also carried out an active public relations campaign designed to maintain and improve the public image of the Peoples Temple and the Jonestown community.

In addition to giving the community at Jonestown its general blessing, there were from time to time indications that the GOG was willing to protect the Peoples Temple from acts it regarded as deliberate harassment. For example, when a team of investigative reporters from the U.S. visited Guyana they told the Embassy they were pressured by the Guyanese immigration service to limit their stay to one day. In another case, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Stoen, the parents of John Victor Stoen, who were in Georgetown to attend court hearings in their child custody suit, had their visas shortened from one month to two weeks and indicated that they had been pressured by the Guyanese immigration service to leave the country.

While the Peoples Temple apparently continued to have the approval of the Guyanese Government at high levels, some working level officials in the police,

customs, and immigration service expressed concern to the Embassy about a large community of Americans living in their country beyond the range of their effective jurisdiction and control. For example, the police expressed concern that the trawler owned by the Peoples Temple which frequently traveled to Trinidad or elsewhere, might be bringing in guns, drugs, or currency illegally. The trawler was subsequently required to stop at the police post at Mabaruma on its homeward journeys to be searched. As far as the Embassy is aware, however, no contraband was ever discovered.

Another police official expressed concern that the Reverend Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple had established the Jonestown community for some criminal purpose, but he did not specify what kind of activities he suspected. He hinted that he intended to increase police surveillance of the Jonestown community in an effort to explore his suspicions. Later, in the spring of 1978, he told a Consular Officer that he had been instructed to "lay off" the Peoples Temple and as a result told his people to have nothing more to do with it.

After the appearance of the New West article and other press coverage in California critical of the Temple and its practices, the Government of Guyana began to receive

complaints and allegations from friends and relatives in the United States as did the Embassy and the Department. Once again, the Peoples Temple countered with a spate of letters from prominent political and religious leaders many of them addressed personally to Prime Minister Burnham, in California, praising the Temple and the Reverend Jones. A number of these letters are in the files (Logs 369-377).

The slow progress of the Stoen child custody case through the Guyanese courts was sometimes cited by members of the Organization of Concerned Relatives as evidence of GOG influence in collusion with the Peples Temple. However, the judge hearing the case was regarded locally as a man of rectitude who believed in the Guyanese tradition of judicial independence. When he withdrew from the case and returned it to the Chief Magistrate for reassignment in August 1978 he cited outside harassment designed to influence his decision as the reason, but he made no mention of pressure from within the Government. Others with whom the Embassy consulted, including the Minister of Justice and the local attorney for Mr. and Mrs. Stoen, indicated that lengthy delays in civil cases were not uncommon in Guyana. Nonetheless, the Embassy sent two sharply-worded diplomatic notes to the GOG in connection

with the Stoen case, one protesting pressure on Mr. and Mrs. Stoen to leave Guyana, and the other protesting the apparent intervention of the GOG into the judicial process (Log 438).

7. QUESTION: Was the Department of State and/or the American Embassy aware of the presence in Jonestown of extensive quantities of firearms and ammunition? If so, was this information given to the Ryan Delegation? Did the presence of the firearms and ammunition conform to relevant Guyanese laws? If not, what action, if any, did the Government of Guyana take with respect to the presence of the weapons?

ANSWER: Neither the Embassy at Georgetown nor the Department was aware of the presence of large quantities of firearms and ammunition in Jonestown. As stated above in answer to Question 2, the community was known to have a certain number of firearms which were used for hunting game in the region, a common practice in that part of Guyana, and ~~when~~ the GOG later informed us it has issued a total of four gun licenses to members of the Jonestown community. The

Embassy was aware of allegations from concerned relatives that there were armed guards at Jonestown who intimidated its inhabitants and prevented their escape. During the various visits of Consular Officers, however, no weapons whatsoever were observed. It is now evident that as many as 40 or more firearms were available in the community, and others may yet be found by the Guyanese police. Reports of survivors of Jonestown appearing in the press indicate thee weapons were smuggled into Guyana piecemeal over a period of time. The presence of these unregistered weapons was illegal under Guyanese law. However, the GOG was presumably unaware of their presence. At least, Guyanese police officials had informed the Embassy that they had been unable to confirm their suspicions that the Peoples Temple might be running guns into Jonestown. While the attitude of the GOG towards the Peoples Temple and the Jonestown community was generally benevolent, it is probable that it would have been sensitive about a large stock of weapons in the hands of foreigners, even those it viewed sympathetically, in a disputed area where it was extremely concerned about its own authority and control.

Hence, we conclude that the GOG probably was unaware of large stocks of weapons at Jonestown beyond those that could be readily explained by the nature and location of the community.

The Department does have in its files an interim report dated August 26, 1977 of an investigation carried out by the U.S. Customs Service of California between February and August 1977 of possible illegal export of up to 170 guns from California to Jonestown in Guyana. The report also mentions other charges lying outside the jurisdiction of the Customs Service such as various forms of physical and mental abuse of Peoples Temple members. The Department apparantly received no further reports of this investigation and we have no knowledge of any charges or indictments arising from it. Officers involved in briefing Congressman Ryan before his departure for Guyana were unaware at the time of the existence of this report because it ante-dated the period beginning in the fall of 1977 of the Department's and the Embassy's most active interest in Jonestown and had become buried in the files. There is no evidence that this report was forwarded to the Embassy or shared with the GOG.

As indicated above, it was evident in the course of the briefings given to Congressman Ryan and his staff in the Department and the Embassy that he knew a great deal more in many ways about the Peoples Temple both in California and in Guyana than the Department or the Embassy did because of his intensive investigation extending over a period of several years. Specifically, he had been in close touch with Mrs. Deborah Blakey since her defection from the Peoples Temple in May of 1978 and, indeed, Mrs. Blakey accompanied Congressman Ryan at his meeting with Department officers on November 13, 1978. Mrs. Blakey was the source of much of the information available on the presence of armed guards and large stocks of weapons at Jonestown. During his meeting with Assistant Secretary Vaky on September 15, 1978, Congressman Ryan asked if the Embassy or the Department were aware of these reports. Department officers replied that we had seen the reports and discussed them with Guyanese officials, but that neither we nor the Guyanese had ever been able to verify them.

5. QUESTION: Were the activities of the Peoples Temple Church investigated by the FBI and/or other U.S. Government agencies and, if so, were their findings made available to the Department of State?

ANSWER: The FBI has informed the Department that it had conducted no investigations of the Peoples Temple prior to the death of Congressman Ryan. As reported in the press, Congressman Ryan apparently requested that the Justice Department conduct an investigation of the Peoples Temple at one time (Log ).

The Department is unaware of any other investigations which may have been conducted by agencies of the federal government, or of state or local governments, of the Peoples Temple or its activities other than the single report of the Customs investigation noted above.

9. QUESTION: What efforts were undertaken by the U.S. Embassy in Guyana to insure that American lives and property of the Jonestown inhabitants were adequately safeguarded?

ANSWER: As indicated above, four visits by Consular Officers were made to Jonestown over the past sixteen months during which the Consular Officer investigated every specific charge of abuse or mistreatment made by relatives of residents of Jonestown, and also every charge that people were being held there against their will. The Consular Officer offered to escort the individual from Jonestown and see that he was repatriated to the United States. In no case were the allegations substantiated by the person interviewed or the offer of escort and repatriation accepted. Consular Officers also attempted to verify visually charges and reports about the presence of armed guards, special punishment facilities, and forms of physical mistreatment which might lend themselves to visual verification. These attempts too were unsuccessful.

The Embassy also investigated the possibility that Peoples Temple members, many of whom were elderly were being billed of their social security checks by the

Reverend Jones and the Peoples Temple. The Consul interviewed annuitants at Jonestown who said that they received their checks personally and personally endorsed them. They admitted making donations to the community but said that this was their right. One annuitant remarked how nice it was to receive a social security check without fear of being mugged. During his trips to Jonestown the Consul personally carried with him and delivered checks on hand at the Embassy pending delivery. He also emphasized to the Peoples Temple and to the Guyanese regional district officer at Port Kaituma the importance of duly registering births and deaths at the Jonestown community. In so doing he had in mind the possibility that the Peoples Temple might continue to collect the social security benefits of deceased members.

As the Committee is aware, American citizens residing abroad are subject to the laws and regulations of the country in which they reside. The State Department and the U.S. Embassy have no legal jurisdiction over them and no legal right to interfere if these Americans choose to avoid contact with U.S. authorities. Under the Privacy Act and basic constitutional gurantees, there is clearly

no authority for any agency of the U.S. Government to launch an investigation into the activities of U.S. citizens in the absence of evidence of the commission of a crime. The Embassy over a period of sixteen months made every effort to investigate the specific allegations of mistreatment that had been made by concerned relatives of Jonestown residents without success, and it also attempted to verify the charges which had appeared in print in the U.S. about general conditions at Jonestown, also without success. Many of these allegations and charges had been discussed informally with Guyanese authorities, some of whom showed concern or indicated that they had suspicions of their own that they had been unable to verify.

The reference to the safeguarding of property of Americans in the question is not entirely clear. The question of the proper disposition of social security benefits is discussed above. Residents of the Peoples Temple commune had very little in the way of personal property. Major items of property including buildings, machinery, farm equipment, etc. WERE presumably the property of the commune. The Department is investigating the legal relationship between individual members of the commune and the Peoples Temple as an institution.

10. QUESTION: Was the U.S. Embas y in Guyana aware of any reports of physical violence being directed against members of the Peoples Temple Church and, if so, was this information made available to the Department of State in Washington?

ANSWER: Both the Embassy and the Department had received over a period of time a large volume of correspondence in the U.S. which was strongly supportive of the Peoples Temple, and also a substantial amount of correspondence highly critical of the Temple. As described above, the Embassy ~~made every effort~~ NEVER FAILED to investigate specific charges and allegations and to ATTEMPT to verify general charges about conditions in Jonestown which had appeared in print. Its findings were fully reported to the Department.

It was evident throughout the contacts of the Department and the Embassy with Congressman Ryan and his staff that they had far more knowledge about the Peoples Temple and its practices including the possible use of violence than we did as a result of ~~the~~ THEIR comprehensive investigation of the Peoples Temple and its activities in California. The Department and the Embassy reported the results of our own inquiries to

to the Congressman and his staff. Congressman Ryan indicated at one point he had no fault to find with the handling of the situation by the Embassy, but said that stronger measures were necessary and that he could do things that the Embassy and the Department could not.

11. QUESTION: Was the Government of Guyana ever requested to investigate the activities of the Peoples Temple Church? If not, why not?

ANSWER: Neither the Department nor the Embassy ever officially requested the Government of Guyana to investigate the activities of the Peoples Temple. Such a request would have been inappropriate in the absence of strong evidence that a crime had been committed or that the welfare of American citizens was seriously threatened. There were ample charges by third parties that this was the case, but the supposed victim of mistreatment was never willing to verify the charge. Embassy officers did discuss these reports informally with Guyanese officials with the police, customs, and immigration departments. They too were

aware of some of these reports but had been unable to confirm them despite efforts to do so. Specifically, a Consular Officer discussed the petition forwarded by Mr. Tim Stoen to Prime Minister Burnham with copies to the Secretary of State and the Embassy with the Commissioner of Police who indicated that he really didn't know what he could do about the allegations contained in the petition in the absence of any corroborating evidence.

The Organization of Concerned Relatives also sent copies of the Blakey affidavit to a number of officials in the State Department and to the Embassy and the GOG. The Embassy did not discuss Mrs. Blakey's charges with the Government of Guyana. However, Consul McCoy did discuss her information and concerns with her on the aircraft on which both were returning to the United States after he had assisted her to leave Guyana. She asked him if she should go to the press with her information. She repeated the question in a telephone conversation with him after she had returned to California. He responded that she was naturally free to do whatever she wished, but that ample press coverage in the U.S.

of the alleged misdeeds of the Reverend Jones and the Peoples Temple had thus far failed to produce any concrete results. He recommended that she go to the relevant investigative AND law enforcement agencies in the U.S. such as the FBI, U.S. Customs, and the alcohol tax unit of the Treasury about possible firearms violations. He made clear that what he and the Embassy needed to jog the GOG into action was solid evidence of the commission of crimes. Thus far no such evidence had been forthcoming. In June 1978, the Embassy in a cable to the Department emphasized that there was no effective Guyanese jurisdiction or control at Jonestown, and asked the Department to review the situation to determine the legal authority and responsibility of the United States Government with respect to a community of American citizens living voluntarily (at least presumptively) abroad. The Embassy's cable stated the view that legal responsibility and jurisdiction for Jonestown and its citizens lay with the GOG. If the Department confirmed this view, the Embassy suggested that it be instructed that it approach the GOG and urge it to assume effective jurisdiction at Jonestown.

The Department replied that jurisdiction plainly belonged to the Government of Guyana, but that it assumed that both the GOG and the Peoples Temple were aware of this. It advised that an approach to the Government of Guyana in the absence of a request from American citizen-members of the community or their families do do so, or of evidence of lawlessness within the community could be construed by some as U.S. Government interference. Hence, the Embassy did not make such a formal approach to the GOG.

12. QUESTION: Did representatives of any U.S. Government agency interview individuals who had "defected" from the Peoples Temple Church in Guyana? If so, was this information made known to Congressman Ryan?

ANSWER: As described in the answer to the preceding question, the head of the consular section of the Embassy interviewed Mrs. Deborah Blakey in May 1978 on the plane returning to the United States and had a further conversation with her by telephone after she had returned to California. The Consul's

interview with Leon Broussard in August 1977 and his action in assisting Broussard to leave the Peoples Temple and return to the U.S. was also described earlier. The Consul also met with Timothy and Grace Stoen in January 1978. They were defectors of the Peoples Temple, but had little personal experience with conditions at Jonestown since they had left the Temple prior to the mass migration of Temple members to Guyana. They did describe the practices and methods of the Peoples Temple up to the time they severed relations with the organization. As noted above, Congressman Ryan had been in close contact with Mrs. Blakey and the Stoens and was fully aware of their information and allegations. Memoranda on the Blakey and Stoen cases are at Tab .

Reports of interviews of former Peoples Temple members which may have been conducted by other agencies of the U.S. Government or of state or local governments were apparently never sent to the Department with the exception of the single customs investigation cited above.

13. QUESTION: Was any consideration given to restricting the passports of potential inhabitants of Jonestown who applied for a passport for the purpose of going to Guyana pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 211a as amended.

ANSWER: Passports of persons travelling to Guyana for the purpose of taking up residence in Jonestown could not have been restricted under current laws and regulations. (The pertinent regulations are stated in Title 22 CFR 51.70 and 51.71, at Tab ).

There are no restrictions on the use of U.S. passports for travel to any geographic area at present. Passports may be denied only in specific cases where the applicant is subject to court orders, requests for extradition, non-payment of government loans and the like, as enumerated in the mentioned sections of the Code of Federal Regulations attached. We are not aware that any members of the Peoples Temple were subject to the provisions for denial of or revocation of a passport.

* * *